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Protest of the Ukrainian Republic to the
United States Against the Delivery
of Eastern Galicia to Polish Domination.

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PROTEST OF THE UKRAINIAN REPUBLIC
UNITED STATES AGAINST THE DELIVERY OF
EASTERN GALICIA TO POLISH DOMINATION.

WASHINGTON, D. C.

1919

**Protest of the Ukrainian Republic to the
United States Against the Delivery of
Eastern Galicia to Polish Domination.**

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UKRAINIAN MISSION

WASHINGTON, D. C.

December 8, 1919.

The Honorable, The Secretary of State,
Department of State, Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor, as the representative in the United States of the Ukrainian Peoples Republic, to submit for the consideration of the Government of the United States the following statement of facts and of the attitude of my Government and its people concerning the decision of the Allied and Associated Powers, recently announced in the newspapers, according to which the Ukrainian (Ruthenian) or Eastern portion of the recent Austrian Province of Galicia has been placed for twenty-five years under a so-called mandate of the Polish Republic.

At this point I desire to make perfectly clear the territorial sovereignty (based on historical and ethnical grounds) of my Government. In 1917, after the collapse of the Russian Empire, the Government of the Ukrainian Peoples Republic was established in that portion of Southern Russia which from time immemorial has been inhabited predominantly by the Ukrainian People; and after a temporary overthrow by the German military force was reestablished. In the latter part of 1918, the Ukrainians of Eastern Galicia (also predominantly Ukrainian and anciently,

prior to the Polish conquest, integrally attached to the Ukrainian People as a whole) set up an independent republican government of Western Ukraine; and in January, 1919, the Ukrainian National Council, in its capacity as legislative body for the Western Ukrainian (formerly Eastern Galician) territory, proclaimed the union of all the Ukrainian territories of old Austria-Hungary with those of former Russia under the Ukrainian Peoples Republic.

The Government of the Ukrainian Peoples Republic consented to this union, and under that name claims independent sovereignty of all the Ukrainian territories herein mentioned.

Concerning the so-called mandate over Galicia recently granted to the Polish Republic, I am under the disadvantage of being unable to obtain authentic official announcement or publication of its details, but must rely upon the apparent authenticity of an Associated Press dispatch dated at Paris, November 21, 1919, in which it is stated that the Supreme Council has agreed to grant Poland a mandate over Eastern Galicia.

The dispatch states:

“By the terms of settlement, Poland is to be the mandatory for twenty-five years, which is believed to be long enough time to secure immediate peace in the troubled territory.

“At the end of twenty-five years the league of nations will have the right to decide how Galicia’s future is to be determined, or whether a plebiscite will be held. But, the Poles say, in twenty-five years they will have had time to reconcile the race differences and give an effective administration, which they believe will win over the Ruthenian population and reconcile them to Polish sovereignty.

“Under the agreement, Galicia is to have a cer-

tain amount of autonomy, and Eastern Galicia will in a way be federated with Poland. Lemberg and several other cities of considerable size in the territory will be affected by the settlement.''

Inasmuch as this problem of the disposition of Eastern Galicia involves the life, liberty and happiness of over 5,000,000 people (more than 65% of whom are Ukrainians), and vitally affects the present and future relations between the Ukrainian and Polish peoples of Europe, which number 37,000,000 and 19,000,000 respectively, you will, I am confident, appreciate the supreme importance which my Government and its people attach to a righteous solution of this problem. If this solution be based not upon the fundamental principles of natural right and justice, but upon other considerations, nothing can follow but a continuation of century-old strife and the injustice and misery incident thereto.

It is the opinion of the Government and of the people I have the honor to represent, that the above-mentioned decision of the Supreme Council is neither righteous nor reasonable; that it will not lead to reconciliation, peace, liberty and happiness, nor to the foundation and perpetuation of a strong and stable Poland; but, on the contrary, that it will lead to continued strife and warfare and to the continuation of oppression of the Ukrainian people; and that it creates the same conditions that indubitably led to the downfall of the old Polish Empire and will as inevitably lead to the downfall of the new Polish Republic. For all these reasons my Government is constrained to protest most emphatically against this delivery of the Ukrainian people to their ancient and modern oppressors, the Poles.

Happily it is not necessary for me to persuade you of the justice of the principles of liberation, self-deter-

mination and self-government of peoples. You know, you believe in and you are governed by these principles. But having to deal with an immense number of international problems it would not be strange for you not to be entirely familiar with the history and present status of the Polish-Ukrainian disputes. And possibly it may not be obvious to you how contradictory is the above-mentioned decision of the Supreme Council of the Allied and Associated Governments to the program of a democratic peace as pronounced by the President of the United States and by yourself.

The very fact that the mandate over Eastern Galicia given to Poland is limited to twenty-five years is a recognition that the Polish title is doubtful; but if we further examine the question under consideration in the light of information accessible to everyone we will find that Poland's claims are entirely without foundation if we are to be guided by the American ideas of peace adjustment.

No less strongly, however, am I convinced that even the arguments of the balance of power and of the necessity of subordinating democratic considerations to the programme of a great and strong Poland do not in the least justify the placing of Ukrainian Eastern Galicia under Polish rule.

To prove this I take the liberty of quoting from American and other authorities and of submitting this protest to your impartial study. In the name of justice and humanity, at this time when imperialistic passions and bolshevist diseases threaten to destroy the fruits of the great victory over European autocracies, I urge you not to ignore the moral issues involved in the struggle for the Liberty and Unity of Ukraine.

In his programme of peace, announced on January

8, 1918, President Wilson laid down, among other propositions, the two following:

“X. The peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured, should be accorded *the freest opportunity of autonomous development.*”

“XIII. An independent Polish state should be erected which should include the territories, *inhabited by indisputably Polish populations*, which should be assured a free and secure access to the sea, and whose political and economic independence and territorial integrity should be guaranteed by international covenant.” (Italics supplied.)

And in his Mt. Vernon speech of July 4, 1918, the President said:

“These are the ends for which the associated peoples of the world are fighting and which must be conceded before there can be peace.

“II. The settlement of every question, whether of territory, of sovereignty, of economic arrangement, or of political relationship, upon the basis of the free acceptance of that settlement *by the people immediately concerned*, and not upon the basis of the material interest or advantage of any other nation or people which may desire a different settlement for the sake of its own exterior influence or mastery.” (Italics supplied.)

The Ukrainians have always accepted and now stand upon these ideas as part of their own demands and expectations.

And even the present leader of the new Polish State, Mr. Paderewski, acknowledged and supported the justness of the same. Following the mass meeting of the oppressed nationalities of central Europe held in Carnegie Hall, September 15, 1918, Mr. Paderewski

not only supported but signed and personally presented to President Wilson a resolution of the meeting, which was in part as follows:

“RESOLVED, That since the majority of the inhabitants of Austria-Hungary, to wit: Poles, Czecho-Slovaks, Ukrainians, Roumanians, Jugo-Slavs and Italians, have been unjustly and cruelly governed by a ruling minority of Germans and Magyars, we demand the dissolution of the present Empire and the organization of its freed peoples according to their own will.”

(By “The present Empire” was meant Austria-Hungary.)

I beg to invite your attention to what is indisputable, namely, that racially, linguistically, geographically, economically, in religious discipline, ceremony and government, and so far as political and national consciousness is concerned, Eastern Galicia is not Polish, but is overwhelmingly Ukrainian. It is an integral part of Ukraine proper and the bulk of the Eastern Galician population has always been bitterly opposed to union with Poland and has always striven for incorporation with the main body of Ukraine, from which it had been separated by force of arms.

Western Galicia is Polish, and as clearly belongs to Poland as Eastern Galicia belongs to Ukrainia. Western and Eastern Galicia were never united (even when Eastern Galicia was under Polish domination before the final partition of Poland) until they were united, by the Austro-Hungarian Empire, into one province under the new name of Galicia; and thenceforward the Austrian Government permitted the Polish land-holding nobility to govern, to exploit and to oppress the Ukrainians of the eastern portion of the province in exchange for the support of the Poles in the Austrian parliament.

According to the International Encyclopedia, the entire Austrian province of Galicia (western and eastern) contained, in 1910, 58.55 per cent of Poles and 40.20 per cent of Ruthenians, which is the local name for Greek-Catholic Ukrainians.

According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, the former predominate in the West and in the big towns, and the latter in the East.

According to official statistics of the Austrian provincial government of Galicia, prepared and published by leaders of Polish political parties, there were, in 1900, in Eastern Galicia, 65.10 per cent Ruthenians, 21.2 Poles, and 12 per cent Jews.

The Ukrainian claim embraces only 48 Eastern districts, where their population is greatly preponderant. Official statistics in 1900 show that the percentage of Ukrainians in these 48 districts stood as follows:

| | |
|------------------|------------|
| In 10 districts, | 75% to 90% |
| In 12 districts, | 67% to 75% |
| In 16 districts, | 60% to 66% |
| In 8 districts, | 50% to 60% |
| In 2 districts, | 41% to 50% |

The real percentage of the Ukrainian population is, however, much higher, for it is a proven and well-known fact that the Polish-Austrian authorities in Lviv purposely interfered with the due process of census in order to obtain a Polish majority in the country.

According to Arnold J. Toynbee: "The Viennese government purchased the support of the Polish group in the Parliament, abandoning the Ruthenians politically to Polish exploitation."

(The New Europe, by Arnold J. Toynbee, London, 1916, pp. 81-84.)

According to the Encyclopedia Britannica: "The

Ruthenians are under an alien yoke, both politically and economically.”

See also “The New Map of Europe,” by Herbert Adams Gibbons, the well-known American student of eastern European affairs, Chapter on Galicia; J. A. Cole’s “The Ground Work of East Central Europe”; and an article in “Geographical Teacher” (Vol. 8, 1915-16, p. 356), by A. Bruce Boswell, Research Fellow in Western Slav History, University of Liverpool.

As a native of Galicia, I know that there is not a single Ruthenian group, party or publication, from the Conservative Catholics to the Social Democrats, which advocates or would agree to a union of Eastern Galicia with Poland as against a union with Ukraine and in my whole life I do not remember a single instance—so sharp is the cleavage between those two nationalities—where a Ruthenian, not to say publicly but even privately, would express such an opinion.

The Polish government has been and is aware of this sentiment. Therefore, though the right of plebiscite has been finally granted by the Poles to the Germans on the Polish-German frontiers, repeated offers on the part of Ukrainians to hold a plebiscite under Allied supervision in Eastern Galicia have been firmly rejected. Both before and after the formal proclamation in January, 1919, by the duly elected representatives of Eastern Galicia (Western Ukraine) of its union with the Ukrainian Peoples Republic, the Poles were not willing to agree to settle this issue by a general vote of the people concerned. This opposition itself indicates its reason. The Poles feared a popular vote. They preferred bullets to ballots. They conquered Eastern Galicia by a superior army of invasion and they hold the occupied territory in subjection only by military force.

It is apparent that some principle of international conduct which was not the American one was in operation when the Supreme Council decided upon a Polish mandate in Ukrainian Galicia. It might be the principle of historic possession or the belief in the political expediency of such a settlement. But neither can bear the test of critical examination.

It is true that from the end of the Fourteenth Century to 1772, Eastern Galicia (or, as it was known at that time, Little Russia or Ruthenia), was ruled by Poland. It must not, however, be forgotten that it fell under the domination of the Polish Kings only after the bitterest struggles, and that its Ukrainian population has strongly resisted, for nearly six centuries, up to the present time, all the attacks and all the oppressions of the Polish feudal regime, maintaining its language, its religion and its nationality. While the peasants in Poland bore the burden of servitude without protest the Ukrainian population of Galicia strongly contested the right of the free-holders and repeatedly broke into open revolt. The clergy, the bourgeoisie and the gentry, all were combatting the rule of the Polish imported aristocracy, which never succeeded in conciliating the native population. The Ukrainians of Galicia, because of their hatred of Polish dominion, became a substantial factor in the great uprising which was started by the Eastern or Cossack Ukraine against the Polish State in 1648, and which, according to most Polish historians, was the main cause of Poland's weakening and partition. (See Bruckner, Bobrzynski, Zakrzewski.)

The Ukrainian-Polish antagonism did not abate but, on the contrary, increased after the Polish partition, when in 1772 the territory presently known as Eastern Galicia, together with the Duchy of Cracow, Zator and

Oswiecim, the present Western Galicia, became an Austrian province. Then for the first time in history those two countries were united into one administrative unit under the new name Galicia. This was done by the Hapsburgs solely for their selfish dynastic aims. It was the policy of their arbitrary government so to organize the provinces of their empire as to have in each province at least two nationalities, to be played against each other and prevent either from achieving self-government. The Ukrainians on every occasion demanded that Galicia, the largest province of Europe, numbering 8,000,000 people, be again divided into its natural components, the Western Polish, and the Eastern Ukrainian.

The Polish leaders opposed and succeeded in defeating this plan through a secret agreement with the late Emperor Francis Joseph I, made in the seventies of the last century, by which they pledged permanent support to the dynasty in its policies of suppression of the other nationalities of Austria-Hungary and received full control of the provincial government of Galicia. This is shown incidentally by the demand of the Allied Powers for the extradition of the present Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Bilinski, formerly Austro-Hungarian Minister of Finance and Governor of the annexed province of Bosnia, who is charged with responsibility for the great war. This agreement was characterized in the Czecho-Slovak press as the great treason to the Slav cause in Austria. Had it not been for the complete and continued support which the Polish parliamentary group was giving to every administration in Vienna there would have been a compact and great majority of Slavic deputies (Czech, Polish, Ruthenian, Slovene and Serbo-Croat) as against the German dominant minority.

The largest part of the progress of civilization in Ukrainian Galicia was achieved in direct opposition to the Polish-Austrian administration. The greatest effort of the Polish provincial government was extended in the interest of a forcible Polonization of the Ukrainians. During the Polish-Austrian regime the principles of political democracy, of popular education and of co-operative movement were ruthlessly and unscrupulously down-trodden. These principles grew hand in hand with the Ukrainian nationalist movement with which they were identical. The Ukrainian movement being forbidden in the former Russian Empire, Eastern Galicia, with its political and intellectual capital Leopold (Lviv in Ukrainian, Lemberg in German) became the center of the whole Ukrainian national movement, which developed with the intellectual and material forces of the whole of Ukraine, and attained greater strength under the so-called constitutional conditions existing in Austria after the year 1867.

During this unremitting struggle against Polish domination, against class legislation, electoral frauds, corrupt courts, denial of suffrage, administrative abuses and even religious intolerance, the Ukrainian people of Eastern Galicia builded, step by step, the solid foundation of its economic, intellectual and moral progress.

Having established an entire system of co-operative associations, rural banks, educational societies, and private schools (higher education in public schools being denied to them in many localities), and having organized an academy of science in Lemberg and a strong democratic press, the Ukrainians have demonstrated the ability to govern themselves. Polish students of Galicia have testified that the level of civic and cultural development of the Galician Ukrainian farmer is higher than that of the Polish farmer of Western Galicia. ("Galicia," by F. Bujak, Cracow, 1908.)

When the Allied Powers, deciding the fate of Austria-Hungary, recognized the right of the several nationalities forming the Austro-Hungarian Empire to self-determination, the Ukrainian Deputies to the provincial legislature and to the Viennese Parliament, elected by general suffrage, terminated Austrian power in Eastern Galicia on November 1, 1918, at the same time proclaiming the Western Ukrainian Republic in all the Ukrainian lands of the Hapsburg monarchy (Eastern Galicia, Ukrainian part of Bukovina and Ukrainian part of Northern Hungary). Later, by unanimous vote, they united, on January 3, 1919, the Western Ukrainian Republic with the Ukrainian Peoples Republic, which had emerged from the ruins of old Russia.

Against the exercise of this right of self-determination has arisen Poland, attempting to conquer Eastern Galicia by force of arms. During the course of the resulting Polish-Ukrainian war the Supreme Council of the Peace Conference by its decision of March 19, 1919, ordered the two parties to make a truce and promised to "hear the territorial claims of both sides with a view to transforming the laying down of arms into an armistice."

The Armistice Commission, instituted by the Supreme Council under the Presidency of General Botha, proposed an armistice to the Ukrainians and the Poles with a provisional line of demarkation, which the Ukrainians accepted but the Poles refused.

It will be remembered that since January, 1918, the Ukrainian Peoples Republic has been in a life and death struggle with the Bolsheviki. All available Ukrainian forces have been dispatched against the invaders in an effort to prevent their overrunning the country.

Suddenly, in the middle of May, 1919, General Haller,

with a Polish army organized in America, of un-Americanized Polish immigrants, began an offensive against the Ukrainians, attacking them from the rear. In this manner Poland took advantage of the critical condition of the Ukraine, a newly organized state, which not only had to defend herself on two different fronts but also, as a result of the blockade, was almost devoid of munitions and supplies and was ravaged by epidemics of typhus.

Prior to the recent Polish conquest of Eastern Galicia the Associated Press of America repeatedly reported that there were no Bolsheviks in Eastern Galicia; that there was better order there than in Poland, and that the Jewish population was living in peace and harmony with the rest of the people; while at the same time there were pogroms in Central Poland and in the Western or Polish part of Galicia.

The Polish occupation of Ukrainian Eastern Galicia has the following facts to its record.

The Ukrainian language has been barred from use in public life and the Ukrainian press has been entirely suppressed.

The Ukrainian schools, public as well as private, and other educational institutions, have been closed, while the Ukrainian chairs at the Ukrainian-Polish University of Lemberg have been abolished.

Ukrainian students have been excluded from the University in Lemberg by the decree requiring from every student a record of service in the Polish army. When Ukrainian professors attempted to organize private courses of higher education the Polish government refused permission.

The teachers of common schools in Eastern Galicia who refused to pledge allegiance to the Polish State were sent to internment camps in Poland.

Nearly all Ukrainian leaders have been arrested and herded into camps, most filthy and unsanitary and infected by typhus, dysentery and other diseases.

The life of those in the internment camps was made so miserable by denial of food, clothes and medical attention that it looked as if the Polish government desired to get rid of them. Those conditions became the subject of severe criticism in the Polish Diet of Warsaw and of intervention on the part of Allied Missions in Poland.

The Polish Diet has passed a law by virtue of which the Polish agricultural population in Poland will be able, with the help of the State, to acquire for reasonable compensation the lands heretofore held in great estates, yet the very same law attempts to preserve the great Polish landed estates in Eastern Galicia lest the Ukrainian farmers, by becoming the owners of these lands, may become economically independent.

Courts-martial of Ukrainian civilians on the bare suspicion of opposition to the Polish rule, burning down of Ukrainian churches and shooting of priests, and the most inhuman treatment of Ukrainian prisoners of war (684 prisoners of war died during a period of 30 days in a single camp out of a total of six or eight thousand); all these are facts which can not be denied.

The following is the latest evidence of the last mentioned horrors:

“International Red Cross Committee on Conditions in Polish Prison Camps,
Geneva, November 2nd,
(Swiss Telegraph Agency.)

“The International Red Cross Committee announces:

“The worst news reaches us on the conditions in some Polish war prison camps. A commission

composed of two delegates of the International Red Cross Committee accompanied by a Major of the Sanitary Corps of the French Military Mission has visited four war prison camps at Brest Litovsk, which last March contained 10,000 men, principally Ukrainians. Between the 10th and 11th day of October there were hardly 4,000 men in these camps. From the 1st to 17th of October 1,124 prisoners died. In the first part of August about 180 prisoners were dying daily. These prison camps were veritable deathbeds. The losses have been caused mainly by dysentery, typhus and insufficient food. Those who survived are in rags, insufficiently nourished and sleep on wooden floors without any straw or covering.”

This shameless policy has been somewhat modified by the Polish administration only since the foreign press has taken up the subject and when the moment approached for final decision by the Peace Conference of the future of Eastern Galicia. But to those who know the history of the Polish-Ukrainian relations in the past centuries the unscrupulous suppression of Ukrainian nationality during the present occupation is only one chapter in the history of Polish attempts to subjugate Ukraine, showing what is to be expected from the Polish dominion over Ukrainian territory should Eastern Galicia be placed under the Polish rule not provisionally only as now, but for five, ten or twenty-five years, as reported.

There is nothing to indicate that the Polish administration in Galicia will change its long established policy of extermination with regard to its Ukrainian subjects. Such change of heart has never yet happened in the history of European peoples. Neither will the Ukrainians change or ever cease their struggle for the liberty of their homes and the honor of their country.

This incessant antagonism and strife between the

Polish and Ukrainian population of the Polish republic will not prove a source of strength but of disunion and weakness of the state. In case of war, Poland will prove as weak an ally to its friends as Austria was to Germany. Not only the Ukrainians of Galicia but those of the whole Ukraine will resent the Polish domination in Eastern Galicia, and will always strive to wrest it from Poland.

The folly of attempting to build up a nation from the top, by super-imposing a government on unwilling peoples, has been demonstrated from the dawn of history. It is exemplified in the histories of the Polish, the Russian and the Austro-Hungarian empires.

The peaceful cohabitation of the Ukrainians and the Poles and the security of the peace of Eastern Europe demand that the three and a half million Ukrainians of Eastern Galicia shall not be torn away from their parental stock—the Ukrainian people.

Any solution of the Eastern Galician problem made in violation of this fundamental demand can not and will not lead to the accord of the two nationalities, nor secure and perpetuate the peace of eastern Europe, and will inevitably destroy all political combinations based on such a solution.

I have the honor to be,

Respectfully yours,

JULIAN BATCHINSKY,

*Diplomatic Representative of the
Ukrainian Peoples Republic.*



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